

American

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President Obama on International Criminal Court Announcement

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
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Statement by President Obama on the International Criminal Court announcement

Today, as the International Criminal Court announces the names of six suspects alleged to have participated in the post-election violence that threatened to tear Kenya apart three years ago, I encourage all Kenyans take a moment to reflect on the tremendous progress their country has made since those dark days. Together, you have been working to reconcile your communities, to reform your institutions to better serve the public good, and to put your country on a path to lasting peace and prosperity. Kenya is turning a page in its history, moving away from impunity and divisionism toward an era of accountability and equal opportunity. The path ahead is not easy, but I believe that the Kenyan people have the courage and resolve to reject those who would drag the country back into the past and rob Kenyans of the singular opportunity that is before them to realize the country's vast potential.

In pursuit of these goals, I urge all of Kenya's leaders, and the people whom they serve, to cooperate fully with the ICC investigation and remain focused on implementation of the reform agenda and the future of your nation. Those found responsible will be held accountable for their crimes as individuals. No community should be singled out for shame or held collectively responsible. Let the accused carry their own burdens – and let us keep in mind that under the ICC process they are innocent until proven guilty. As you move forward, Kenyans can count on the United States as a friend and partner.

Terror Attack on Iranian Mosque “Disgraceful,” President Obama Says

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama denounced a bombing attack targeting Iranian civilians in Chabahar as “disgraceful and cowardly” and said that those who carried out the attack “must be held accountable.”

According to Iranian press reports, at least 41 people were killed and 50 more wounded in a suicide attack on a mosque that targeted Shiite Muslim worshippers on the eve of the Shiite holy day Ashura. The Iranian Sunni Muslim militant group Jundallah, which the United States has designated as a terrorist organization, has claimed responsibility for the carnage, State Department

spokesman P.J. Crowley said December 15.

“The murder of innocent civilians in their place of worship during Ashura is a despicable offense,” Obama said in a December 15 statement. He said the United States “stands with the families and loved ones of those killed and injured, and with the Iranian people, in the face of this injustice.”

Acts of terrorism such as what occurred in Chabahar “recognize no religious, political, or national boundaries,” he said, and the world must together “condemn and oppose all forms of terrorism and support the universal right of human beings to live free from fear and senseless violence.”

In a separate statement, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the attack targeted men, women and children who were worshipping at the mosque, and she extended condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims on behalf of the American people.

“This is yet another example of terrorists using cowardly methods to inflict pain and fear on innocent civilians. The perpetrators of this attack must be held to account for their actions,” she said.

“The United States condemns all forms of terrorism and sectarian-driven violence, wherever it occurs, and we stand with the victims of these abhorrent and reprehensible acts. The global community must remain vigilant in combating terrorist organizations and individuals that threaten lives in every part of the world,” Clinton said.

On November 3, Clinton designated Jundallah as a foreign terrorist organization in response to its numerous attacks on Iranian civilians and government officials since the group's inception in 2003.

According to a November 3 media note, Jundallah has used suicide bombings, ambushes, kidnappings and targeted assassinations, including a May 2009 attack on the crowded Shiite Amir al-Mo'menin Mosque in Zahedan, an October 2009 bomb attack that killed more than 40 people in the town of Pishin, and a July 2010 attack on the Grand Mosque in Zahedan.

“The [Obama] Administration condemned the Grand Mosque attack in the strongest possible terms and stated that the United States extends its sympathy to the families and loved ones of those injured and killed,” the note said, adding that both Obama and Clinton also “called for the perpetrators of this horrific attack to be held accountable for their actions.”

The U.S. designation of Jundallah, and other

organizations, as terrorist groups is an effective means of curtailing support for their activities and pressuring them to abandon terrorism, the note said.

"The consequences of these designations include a prohibition against persons knowingly providing material support or resources to Jundallah, and the blocking of all property and interests in property of the organization that are in the United States, or come within the United States, or the control of U.S. persons."

Secretary Clinton Offers Plan to Increase State, USAID Effectiveness

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — An internal study of the U.S. State Department lays out a plan for better coordination of the U.S. response to crises, conflicts and natural disasters around the world.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton unveiled the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) December 15. She said that to adapt to a changing global landscape and changing priorities, the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) intend to make a wide range of changes in their organization, in their coordination with other U.S. government agencies, and in how they implement their overseas programs.

Talking to State Department employees December 15, Clinton said the QDDR is "a blueprint for how we can make the State Department and USAID more nimble, more effective and more accountable." It charts a way for the U.S. use of "civilian power" to combine the efforts of its diplomats, development specialists and aid workers to "prevent and respond to crisis and conflict."

U.S. efforts to advance democracy, promote sustainable economic growth and strengthen the rule of law around the world are "overlapping and mutually reinforcing endeavors," she said. "They demand not just the skills of our State Department diplomats and USAID development experts, but also the expertise of civilian specialists across the U.S. government."

Plans for the QDDR, an internal self-assessment study that is to take place every four years, were first announced in July 2009.

Proposed changes to the State Department's bureaucracy include the creation of an under secretary for economic growth, energy and environmental affairs who would oversee a new Bureau of International Energy Affairs, as well as an under secretary for civilian security, democracy and human rights who would oversee a new Bureau for

Crisis and Conflict Operations. The review also calls for the creation of a special coordinator for sanctions and illicit finance, and urges the U.S. Congress to replace the special coordinator for counterterrorism with a Bureau for Counterterrorism.

The QDDR recognizes President Obama's directive that development "is a strategic, economic and moral imperative," on a par with diplomacy as "a pillar of American civilian power," Clinton said. The United States can make its biggest impact in the areas of food security, global health, climate change, sustainable economic growth, democracy and governance, and humanitarian assistance. In all of these areas, "we will emphasize the rights of women and girls throughout," she said.

The review gives USAID leadership of the Obama administration's global food security initiative known as Feed the Future, and also offers USAID leadership of the Global Health Initiative by the end of 2012 provided that the agency meets certain benchmarks.

"We are determined to rebuild USAID as the world's premier development agency," Clinton said. "These are important steps that will help our development experts around the world do their job more effectively."

The QDDR also seeks to improve coordination between State and USAID, including more clearly defined missions for personnel from both agencies, particularly when responding to emergencies. "We can't keep reinventing the wheel in every crisis," she said.

The State Department is also looking at how to balance the tension between short-term and long-term needs in its foreign assistance in what she described as "a resource-constrained world."

"You've got a perfect example in Haiti right now," she said, with the country's continued humanitarian crisis from the January 12 earthquake affected by a cholera epidemic and most recently an electoral crisis. In such situations, it is difficult to try to balance a country's competing needs, she said.

"Which do you address first?" she asked. "If you ignore the legitimate questions raised about the election, you create conditions for longer-term instability. If you don't continue to provide assistance on the humanitarian side while you try to deal with the questions posed by the election, then you hurt the people you're trying to help."

"Part of what the QDDR is attempting to do is to better lay out what we expect from ourselves, and so as we address these inherent tensions we have a clearer organizational and operational understanding of what we're capable of doing and what we're not," Clinton said.

"The United States cannot wave some magic wand and solve these problems by focusing on either development or diplomacy. We can't do it alone. The world can't do it without us," she said. "And so my goal is to make sure that this QDDR represents our best efforts at addressing these very difficult challenges."

Carbon Capture: A Tough Nut to Crack

By Karin Rives
Staff Writer

Washington — Populations grow, emissions increase, global temperatures continue to rise. What to do?

Emission cap-and-trade schemes and renewable energy alone likely won't be able to bend the carbon curve — the term climate-change experts like to use to describe a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

For that reason, governments and companies increasingly are looking for new and unconventional solutions to the climate problem.

Capturing emissions of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, and storing them in huge underground repositories for thousands of years is one proposal on the table. The U.S. government is spending \$4 billion and private industry is contributing \$7 billion to investigate potential carbon storage sites and technologies nationwide.

Ten major demonstration projects are under way, along with more than 50 smaller projects — most of which were initiated in the last two years. The goal is to bring between five and 10 commercial projects online by 2016.

One involves converting an idled oil-fired power plant in Illinois to coal, a cheaper fuel, and installing a boiler that uses oxygen instead of air during combustion. That creates a form of carbon dioxide gas that can be easily captured and compressed into a transportable liquid.

Federal funding supports the new plant, pipelines and a yet-to-be-determined storage site in the Midwestern state. The retrofitted plant will capture nearly 1 million tons of carbon dioxide annually.

"These new technologies will not only help fight climate change, they will create jobs now and help position the U.S. to lead the world in carbon-dioxide capture technologies, which will only increase in demand in the years ahead," Energy Secretary Steven Chu said when announcing the funding.

STORAGE CAN LAST 5,700 YEARS

The United States produced nearly 7,000 million metric

tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2008, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Factories and other so-called stationary pollution sources accounted for nearly half of those emissions.

A new study from the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that as much as 20,000 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions could be stored for up to 5,700 years in North American saline rock, oil and gas reservoirs and dormant coal fields. If used, this could allow the U.S. to cut emissions while continuing to take advantage of its large coal reserves.

But the cost of trapping emissions, turning them into a liquid and transporting the liquid to underground storage sites kilometers away is very high. Building a national network of pipelines and retrofitting U.S. power plants and other buildings could easily cost tens or hundreds of billions of dollars, studies have estimated.

BUILD A MARKET AND THEY WILL COME

The EPA and the Department of Energy concluded in an August 2010 study that coal-fired power plants are the best candidates for carbon capture and storage (CCS). The nation's 600-some coal plants supply nearly 50 percent of the energy consumed in America, and produce 40 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions.

Because of the cost involved with CCS, the agencies also concluded that such technology will be deployed on a wide scale only when driven by a national policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. What's needed, they wrote, is a "stable, long-term, market-based framework to channel private investment into low-carbon technologies."

Howard Herzog, a senior research engineer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a world-renowned carbon capture specialist, agreed.

"We're not sending enough signals to the market to make CCS technology competitive, so essentially all projects need government support in one way or another," he said. With a commercial market possibly 20 years away, it will be important to use interim policies, such as a small surcharge on electric bills, to sustain funding for a handful of carbon capture and storage initiatives, he said.

"It will allow capacity-building in the private sector," Herzog said, "so that when the market is ready in 20 years, we can have large-scale projects come on hand fairly quickly."

Worldwide, there are now between 20 and 30 "serious" projects under way that try to capture emissions from power plants, he said.

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